-Rise Above Plastics Facts and Figures. (Courtesy of Beachapedia)

- The amount of plastic produced from 2000 - 2010 exceeds the amount produced during the entire last century.[1]
- Plastic is the most common type of marine litter worldwide.[2]
- An estimated 100,000 marine mammals and up to 1 million sea birds die every year after ingesting or being tangled in plastic marine litter.[3]
- Up to 80% of the plastic in our oceans comes from land-based sources.[4]
- Plastics comprise up to 90% of floating marine debris.[5]
- In 2009 about 3.8 million tons of waste plastic "bags, sacks and wraps" were generated in the United States, but only 9.4% of this total was recycled.[6]
- Plastics do not biodegrade, but instead break down into small particles that persist in the ocean, absorb toxins, and enter our food chain through fish, sea birds and other marine life.[7]
- Plastic bags are problematic in the litter stream because they float easily in the air and water, traveling long distances and never fully breaking down in water.
- Cleanup of plastic bags is costly. California spends $25 million annually to landfill discarded plastic bags, and public agencies spend more than $300 million annually in litter cleanup.[8]
- It is estimated that Americans go through about 100 billion plastic bags a year, or 360 bags per year for every man, woman and child in the country.[9]
- Those 100 billion plastic bags, if tied together, would reach around the Earth's equator 776 times![10]

Footnotes

1. ↑ Thompson, R.C. "Plastics, the environment and human health: current consensus and future trends." *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B-Biological Sciences.* 364.1526 (2009):2153-2166.
2. ↑ Derraik, J.G.B. "The pollution of the marine environment by plastic debris: a review." *Marine Pollution Bulletin* 44. (2002): 843.
   Gregory, M.R., Ryan, P.G. "Pelagic plastics and other seaborne persistent synthetic debris: a review of Southern Hemisphere perspectives." *Marine Debris – Sources, Impacts and Solutions.* Ed. J.M. Coe, D.B. Rogers. New York: Springer-Verlag, 1997, pp. 4, 9-66.
3. ↑ United Nations. *Marine Litter: Trash that Kills.* , Web. 14 Feb 2011. http://www.unep.org/regionalseas/marinelitter/publications/docs/trash_that_kills.pdf, pp. 10.
   Wallace, N. "Debris Entanglement in the Marine Environment: A Review." *Proceedings of the Workshop on the Fate and Impact of Marine Debris.* Eds. R.S. Shomura, H.O. Yoshida. U.S. Department of Commerce: NOAA Technical Memorandum. NMFS, NOAA-TM-NMFS-SWFC-5, pp. 259-277.
4. ↑ California Ocean Protection Council. "An Implementation Strategy for the California Ocean Protection Council Resolution to Reduce and Prevent Ocean Litter." 2008. 3.
   "Ships Set Sail to Examine the Vast Patch of PLastic in the Pacific Ocean." 80beats. Discover, 08/03/2009. Web. http://blogs.discovermagazine.com/80beats/2009/08/03/ships-set-sail-to-examine-the-vast-patch-of-plastic-in-the-pacific-ocean/.
   "Marine Debris." California Coastal Cleanup Day, Web. http://www.cleanupday.org/education.htm.
5. ↑ United Nations. Marine Litter: An Analytical Overview. , Web. 14 Feb 2011. http://www.unep.org/regionalseas/marinelitter/publications/docs/anl_oview.pdf.
6. ↑ United States Environmental Protection Agency , 2009. Web. 14 Feb 2011. http://www.epa.gov/osw/nonhaz/municipal/pubs/msw2009rpt.pdf.
7. ↑ Williams, Caroline. "Battle of the Bag." *New Scientist.* (2004): Print.
8. ↑ Californians Against Waste. "The Problem of Plastic Bags." http://www.cawrecycles.org/issues/plastic_campaign/plastic_bags/problem.
9. ↑ Royte, Elizabeth. *Garbage Land: On the Secret Trail of Trash.* Little, Brown and Company, 2005.
10. ↑ U.S. International Trade Commission. Polyethylene Retail Carrier Bags from Indonesia, Taiwan, and Vietman. Publication 4080. May 2009, pg. IV-7.
    *Calculation is based on the following: 2008 bag consumption, according to U.S. International Trade Commission = 102,105,637,000. Earth's Circumference = 131,480,184 feet, Average bag length = 1ft.